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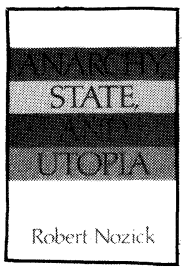
ANARCHY, STATE, AND UTOPIA

By Robert Nozick



Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia* is, to date, the most sophisticated philosophical treatment of libertarian theory and themes. It is a book which merits the careful attention—and as such it will *require* the careful attention—of all persons concerned with moral, social, or legal theory. As with any theoretical work of excellence, the virtue of this book consists not in the conclusions of the author, but in the power and interests of the arguments he employs. Unfortunately, a brief and fairly rough-shod and episodic account of the progress of Nozick's argument is all that can be presented in this short review.

Nozick espouses a form of minimal-state libertarianism. In Part I ("State-of-Nature Theory, or How to Back into a State without Really Trying") he defends the legitimacy of what he deems a minimal state against the moral challenge of the individualist (free-market) anarchist. The guiding idea here is that any arrangement among human beings which comes about by morally legitimate steps, i.e., by steps in which no persons's rights are violated, is itself legitimate. Nozick holds that a dominant protective association can rise by legitimate steps to the type of prominence which would constitute it a state. Roughly, a dominant and libertarian-minded protective association can require that all demands for the punishment of its clients be mediated through or monitored by its judicial structure. Nozick does not make the strong (i.e., bold) claim that private punishment would be a violation of the rights of the dominant agency's clients. Instead he relies on the weaker (i.e., more modest) claim that those who propose private punishment impose a *risk* of the violation of rights upon the potential subjects of this punishment. This weaker claim is conjoined with the very intriguing claim that certain risky actions (among them are the actions of private punishment) can legitimately be prohibited if those who suffer the prohibitions are compensated (in certain ways) by those who inflict the prohibitions and who thereby insure themselves against violations of rights. This conjunction of claims implies that the dominant association can legitimately prohibit private punishment with the appropriate compensation. According to Nozick, such a dominant protective association would be a state. Considerable space is devoted to the nuances of and the rationale for the principle of compensation. Questions about the possible justification of, need for, and implications of the principle of compensation will surely become a major new area for libertarian thought.

In Part II ("Beyond the Minimal State?") Nozick challenges attempts to justify the more-than-minimal state. (I think that most readers should start by reading Part II.) Most significant is the extensive treatment of distributive justice. This includes a sketch of what Nozick calls an "entitlement" theory of distributive justice and a devastating criticism, launched from the entitlement view, of all "end-state" theories of distributive justice of which Rawls' theory is the latest, most elaborate, and most highly touted. Nozick's discussion of the relation between different conceptions of justice would, even by itself, be a major accomplishment. Further along a good example of Nozick's anti-statist devilry is his argument that Marx' introduction of the notion of *socially necessary* labor when conjoined with the usual Marxist demand that workers receive the full value of their labor implies that workers must take up the market risks which, in capitalist society, they willingly and, perhaps, rationally avoid by working for set wages.

In Part III ("Utopia") Nozick invokes an independent line of reasoning in justification of the no-more-than minimal state. The basic line, as I construe it, proceeds as follows: Any smart utopian, i.e., any utopian who recognizes the massive difficulties of precognizing and constructing Utopia, will place his bets for the creation of Utopia on the institutionalization of certain processes. (Nozick's emphasis on processes in contrast to end-states is the recurrent and unifying theme of his book.) This institutionalization will be a "filter device" which will effect the evolution of human communities so as to maximize the chances for Utopia (or Utopias) Nozick maintains that the favored filter device of the smart utopian will be that device which insures that individuals will be free to enter into any community they see fit, to contractually commit themselves within a community to whatever is contractually agreeable there, to change such communities and to change communities (contracts permitting). The filter device is, then, the minimal state. For any form of nonaggressive community is permitted to develop and, perhaps, prove itself under the framework of the minimal state. Thus, at least in the sense of having a decisive reason (now) for favoring the minimal state, all smart utopians must at least be closet libertarians.

Some things which the reader might expect in *Anarchy, State and Utopia* he will not find. Nozick does not provide a foundational argument for human rights. Nor does he specify the scope of rights by, for instance, clarifying the concept of coercion. Nor are the principles of justice in acquisition, transfer, and punishment worked out. All this remains largely to be done. It is a measure of Nozick's originality that *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* is such an important book *without* dealing with these standard issues. The book is challenging and great fun. REVIEWED BY ERIC MACK / **Political Philosophy** (367 pages) / **LR Price $12.95**

NATURAL LAW IN POLITICAL THOUGHT

By Paul E. Sigmund

As a moral foundation for libertarianism, natural law is a mixed blessing. In its various manifestations throughout history, natural law theory has been used to "justify" oligarchy, feudalism, theocracy, and even socialism. In fact, until the advent of political individualism in the seventeenth century, natural law was linked to an organismic view of society and was used to dictate the role or function of the individual within the structure of society as a whole. It was not until natural law evolved into a theory of natural rights that "nature," to quote the historian Basil Wiley, "ceases to be mainly a regulating principle, and becomes mainly a liberating principle."

Thus, when libertarians claim that coercion is contrary to natural law (or to the nature of man), they must realize that, aisde from the truth or falsity of this assertion, such an appeal to "nature" places them in a confused and nebulous political tradition. It was this confusion, coupled with the seeming ability to "justify" anything with reference to natural law, that made modern assaults on natural-law theory so persuasive to many philosophers. It is for this reason that libertarians must do their homework carefully when venturing into the twisted pathways of natural law theory, and an excellent place to begin is Paul Sigmund's *Natural Law in Political Thought.*

Natural law theorists, writes Sigmund, share a common belief "in the ability of human *reason* to deal with moral problems." More specifically, natural law entails "the belief that there exists in nature and/or human nature a rational order which can provide intelligible value-statements independently of human will, that are universal in application, unchangeable in their ultimate content, and are morally obligatory on mankind." This belief recurs throughout the history of political thought "because it seems that man can never give up the search for a rational justification of political and moral values."

While natural law is primarily a moral doctrine, its application to political theory has consisted, in essence, of the claim that there exists

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Sigmund— *(Continued from page 1)*

over and above man-made (positive) law, a higher, objective law by which positive law can be judged—a law or principle, in other words, rooted somehow in the "nature of things." Contrary to legal positivism, where the ultimate justification for law lies in its promulgation by a political authority, natural law theorists have denied to the state the ability to create law *ex nihilo*. Instead, positive law must conform to the requirements of natural law, from whence it derives its moral force.

Paul Sigmund examines virtually every major figure, whether philosopher or legal theorists, who falls within this general frame of reference, and he does so with great clarity and ease of style. Included here are such diverse thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Cicero, the medieval canonists, Acquinas, Ockham, Suarez, Grotius, Hooker, Hobbes, Locke, and the American Founding Fathers. Also included are various critics of natural law, such as Jeremy Bentham, who referred to the doctrine of natural rights as "nonsense upon stilts."

Although primarily expository in intent, *Natural Law in Political Thought* is not without controversial interpretations. For example, Sigmund wishes to draw into the natural-law camp such questionable figures as Rousseau, Burke, Kant, and Marx. The first two philosophers can plausibly, if problematically, be interpreted in this manner, but to interpret the latter two in this way appears to me quite fantastic. Since, for Kant, the real or "noumenal" world is closed to man's comprehension, I fail to see how he could in any sense be said to ground his moral theory in the nature of man or the world. The Thomistic interpretation of Kant as representative of the formal destruction of natural-law theory is certainly the more accurate view.

As for Marx, his advocacy of economic determinism, under which economic conditions control one's philosophy rather than vice-versa, renders any kind of moral stance on his part superfluous (not to mention contradictory) to his basic viewpoint. And this eliminates the possibility of placing Marx in the natural law tradition. While it may be true, as Sigmund says, that "for all his pretense at being a scientist, Marx was fundamentally a moralist," this evaluation surely undercuts the entire purpose of the Marxian system.

Despite my strong disagreement on these points, I can easily recommend *Natural Law in Political Thought* as one of the best introductions to natural law available today. Libertarians will find it a valuable source of information from which they will hopefully build a clear and systematic political theory. REVIEWED BY GEORGE H. SMITH / **Political Philosophy** (214 pages) / **LR Price $4.95**

CRUSOE OF LONESOME LAKE

By Leland Stowe

This is a true story—a biography—that easily rivals the most exciting and imaginative adventure fiction.

In 1912, at the age of 21, a red-haired American took a two-day voyage north from Vancouver, British Columbia. His name was Ralph A. Edwards, and he was beginning a 40-year heroic struggle for survival (on his terms) against Canada's untamed wilderness. Determined to create a successful farm on the 160 acres offered as a homesteading pre-emption, he knew that he must journey *beyond* the settled areas to find good land.

So after stopping briefly at a seaport village, he traveled more than 40 miles inland and staked his claim beside an unnamed body of water that he christened "Lonesome Lake."

Schooled only to the fourth grade, Edwards planned his battle against nature in a most systematic and scholarly way. He devoured every useful book that he could find, mastering all the textbooks in use at an agricultural college, and learning such subjects as geology, geography, agronomy, engineering, forestry, animal husbandry, biology, botany, and zoology. This, along with his childhood farm experience, was all the preparation he had. He had absolutely no camping experience and none of the numerous skills required of pioneers.

Working entirely alone, he cleared an area of trees measuring eight feet in diameter and as tall as ten-story buildings. He built his own cabin, barns, furniture, and canoe. He grew crops and protected them from hungry grizzly bears. He devised his own unique mechanical contraptions to move logs and perform other necessary jobs quickly and efficiently. He taught himself to play the violin. Again and again, using only his own ingenuity and whatever he could learn from books, he singlehandedly did whatever he needed or wanted to have done.

In time he created a productive farm, and with the later help of a wife and children, expanded it into a well-run estate. He taught his children what he had learned, and then worked *with* them in learning more: engineering skills; correspondence courses in English, mathematics, and history; and medical skills. Later he and his daughter designed their own airplane, built a mechanized hangar, and taught themselves to fly! They produced their own electricity with water power, using a home-made generator and wiring system.

The author, Leland Stowe, presents several interesting comparisons of Edwards with the fictional hero, Robinson Crusoe. What is especially striking is that Edwards had to face *greater* obstacles, and use *greater* ingenuity, than DeFoe's character. The storms, below-zero-temperatures, wild animals, frozen lakes and streams, ruined crops, and a fire that destroyed his cabin were all part of his life at Lonesome Lake. None of them defeated the man, and, despite all that he went through, he never *suffered*. Read the story of Ralph Edwards and be inspired. REVIEWED BY WILLIAM DANKS / (172 pages) / **LR Price $6.95**

TEACHING MONTESSORI IN THE HOME: THE SCHOOL YEARS

By Elizabeth G. Hainstock

Our educational system is in great turmoil today, often swinging from archaic, repressive methodology to hastily prepared "innovative" programs. Parents and children alike are helpless victims of the situation—with few alternative institutions available to them.

In *Teaching Montessori In the Home: The School Years*, Elizabeth G. Hainstock has provided parents with an excellent program for developing and strengthening their child's mathematical and language skills so that the child will not be at the mercy of inadequate school systems.

In her introduction, Mrs. Hainstock asks the parent: "How much do you really know about what's going on in your child's classroom? Does he enjoy learning? If not, why not? Is he being allowed to utilize his potential to the best of his abilities? Or is he just drifting along the border of the nebulous abyss of non-learning that soon will engulf too many of our children? . . . Pay attention before it's too late! Your children don't *have* to be on the losing end of the educational spectrum."

This much needed book is a sequel to Mrs. Hainstock's earlier work: *Teaching Montessori In the Home: The Preschool Years*, in which she lays the groundwork for the skills which the current book is designed to develop. She makes it clear that the child's learning patterns are sequential, and that in order for him to profit from these exercises, the child should have extensive practice with the materials discussed in her earlier work.

Why does the author concentrate exclusively on mathematics and language skills? First, these are the two most fundamental areas upon which the child's future learning will rest, and secondly, they are the areas in which our schools are least adequate. Mrs. Hainstock believes that through the Montessori exercises she presents, the parent can spare his child the agony of mislearning or failing to learn these important skills.

The exercises in the book proceed from a foundation of manipulative, verbal and visual practice toward an increased understanding of abstract symbols. The child has the opportunity to work with materials directly, and through repetition and understanding, he becomes equipped to cope with the more abstract relationships. If he succeeds with these "mind building" exercises, he will be prepared when theoretical knowledge is required for success.

Both of Mrs. Hainstock's books are tremendously valuable to any parent who does not want his child to become a victim of our educational crisis. The materials are easy to make and to use, and the parent need not be a linguist or mathematician to assist his child in learning these crucially important skills. REVIEWED BY PEGGY FARRELL / **Education** / (176 pages) / **LR Price $6.95**

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INTRODUCTION TO MUSICAL LISTENING: A GUIDE TO RECORDED CLASSICAL MUSIC

By John Hospers

PART VI: ORCHESTRAL MUSIC OF THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

Smetana's symphonic cycle "Ma Vlast" ("My Country")—of which "The Moldau" ("The River") is the most famous excerpt—though not up to his operas, is excellently performed and recorded by Kubelik on a two-record set, DG-2707054. Dvorak's orchestral work, except for the second movements of his Symphonies 8 and 9 ("From the New World"), are in the forgettable category: you will enjoy them a few times and then tire of them. But there is one superb Dvorak orchestral work which is different from his other orchestral work: the Cello Concerto—certainly the greatest of all cello concertos (there are not many even moderately good ones). Since the Casals-Szell performance is no longer available, get it with brilliant sound as performed by Rostropovich and conducted by Von Karajan on DG-139044. Of the works of the more recent Czech composer Leos Janacek (1854-1928), try his delightful "Sinfonietta" (Ozawa on Angel 36045).

The symphonies of Anton Bruckner (1824-1896) are of somewhat uneven quality, with awkward transitions and "padded" passages intermixed with stretches of great lyrical beauty and cumulative powers, but his scherzos are always a delight. He wrote at least three memorable symphonies: no. 4 ("Romantic"), with its enchanting vernal quality (fully rendered by Barenboim on DG 2530336); no. 7, with its stately, slow, but finally overwhelming slow movement (best done on a three-record set with the no. 4, both conducted by Karajan on Angel S-3779; otherwise get Klemperer on Angel S-3626); and finally his masterpiece, the no. 9, with its muted dread, hope, and mystery, and ending in either mysticism, darkness, or quiet radiance (depending on what you bring to it), of which the unforgettable recording is by Furtwangler on Heliodor 2548701E. If you cannot get it (it is a foreign recording not listed in Schwann), get the fine Mehta recording on London 6462.

We come now to the composer who is, in the increasing opinion of those who have been exposed to his work, the greatest symphonist of the last hundred years, Gustav Mahler (1860-1911). His symphonies are of such monumental scope, with such massive orchestral (and often choral) requirements, and with qualities of feeling hitherto unexpressed in music, that many critics did not recognize the emotional power and the symphonic inventiveness lying behind (or coming through) the sounds. Each of his 10 symphonies is in its own way a masterpiece, and some carry such elemental power that listeners remain speechless and immobile in their seats—in the case of the Second Symphony I have seen members of the audience leave the auditorium with tears flowing down their cheeks. Mahler "grabs" many listeners who are left comparatively cold by other composers: his works strike an emotional jugular, things like "the mystery of existence" and the "the loveliness and the tragedy of life." The First Symphony is exciting and monumental, qualities which are superbly conveyed in the Bruno Walter performance (still the best) on Odyssey Y-30047. For a more modern sound, get Horenstein's recording on Nonesuch 71240.

But even this massive symphony is only a curtain-raiser. Of his four greatest symphonies—in my opinion these are 2, 3, 9, and 10—no. 2 ("The Resurrection") is the one to start with. It carries its intense emotionality more "on its face." With oversized orchestra, plus chorus, plus soloists and bells, it ascends to such heights of exaltation as to leave the listener paralyzed and speechless. There are many fine recordings of this work, but you can seldom go wrong with the Mahler-Bernstein combination: Bernstein has a special affinity for "the tragic sense of life" which is so poignantly expressed in Mahler's work. Bernstein's performance of the Symphony no. 2, offered this month by *LR*, is simply overwhelming. Only after you have heard it a few times should you turn to Symphony no. 3, which I have come through time to prefer even to the no. 2. Of all Mahler's works the no. 3 is the most affirmative in tone, and one is left levitated as its matchless end is reached. Here again get the incomparable Bernstein (available from *LR*), especially for its final movement. (Regrettably, it does not use a real flugelhorn in two intermediate movements, and this does make a difference—perhaps for some listeners even tipping the balance in favor of Solti's breath-taking recording on London 2223.)

By contrast, the no. 4 is shorter and more quietly introspective; Bernstein's lyrical rendition is on Columbia MS-6152. The no. 5, with its nostalgically intense Adagietto and its powerful, savage horn and trombone passages in other movements, is perfectly suited to Solti's driving intensity on London 2228. For the nos. 6, 7, and 8, as elsewhere, take Bernstein for heart-rending passion and Solti for dramatic drive and heroism. Only with the no. 8, "The Symphony of a Thousand," does Mahler (in my opinion) ever descend occasionally to the "vulgarly ostentatious." [Ed. note: Reviewed in the February 1974 *Books for Libertarians* by Mark Corske.]

In the two final symphonies, all the exhibitionism is gone and the means economical, yet the emotionality is tremendously intense. Only after hearing at least some of the earlier ones can the uniqueness and greatness of these two be fully appreciated. For Symphony no. 9, again Bernstein is overpowering. The recording available from the *LR* Book Service couples this with Symphony no. 5, but if you want it by itself, get the Solti on London 2220. For Symphony no. 10, get Ormandy, where it is coupled with Mahler's song-cycle, "Das Lied von der Erde," or alone on Columbia M2S-775. Mahler is "total experience," and after it no one is quite the same again.

An entirely different vein is the orchestral work of Mahler's friend Richard Strauss (1864-1949). Though his operas are his principal claim to fame, he wrote some impressive orchestral tone-poems, chief among them being "Don Quixote," written for cello and orchestra—the best sound-plus-performance is by Maazel (cellist, Brabec) on London CS-6593—and "Ein Heldenleben" ("A Hero's Life"), best done by Haitink on Philips 6500048. "Also Sprach Zarathustra" seems to me entirely forgettable: after its famous first minute (celebrated in the film *2001*) it deteriorates and wanders interminably. Short and light, but enjoyable, are "Don Juan," "Death and Transfiguration," and "Till Eulenspiegel"—all of them excellently done on Odyssey Y-30313, conducted by Szell.

A worthy successor to Tchaikovsky, whose early works resemble those of that great Russian composer, is the Finn, Jan Sibelius (1865-1957). The Symphony no. 2 is melodic like Tchaikovsky, but sterner ("the king of the north") and more inexorable in its rhythm and climax; its spirit is powerfully conveyed by Szell on Philips 835306. But it is his late symphonies that pack the wallop: the mysterious and probing no. 4 (Karajan, who seems to have a special affinity for Sibelius' music, does a fine job on DG-138974, with Sibelius' lovely tone-poem "The Swan of Tuonela" for violin and orchestra on part of the other side); the joyfully dramatic no. 5 (here Bernstein's performance is probably the best, on Columbia MS-6749); and most of all that miracle of symphonic construction, the one-movement no. 7, which is among the finest works in the entire symphonic literature (Karajan on DG-139032, coupled with the no. 6). It has to be heard a number of times; it gathers momentum slowly, like bits and pieces floating out of the fog and back again, but all coming together toward the end in a climactic vortex of great but controlled power. Sibelius' various tone-poems and his violin concerto are listenable, but (except for "The Swan of Tuonela") froth in comparison with his symphonies.

The Danish composer, Carl Nielsen (1865-1931), is less known in the United States than Sibelius, but in his own unique idiom he has composed some powerful orchestral works. Choicest among them is the Symphony no. 5 (Op. 5), best recorded by jensen, on London 1143. Since this is a discontinued item, try Bernstein on Columbia MS-6414.

An unduly neglected twentieth-century composer is the Englishman, Frederic Delius (1862-1934). For works of quiet beauty and rustic pastoral quality, with an admixture of modern harmonies, Delius has no peer. On one record, "In A Summer Garden: Music by Frederic Delius," you will

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Music IN REVIEW

MAHLER: SYMPHONY NO. 2 IN C MINOR, "THE RESURRECTION" (2 records) / **LR Price $9.95** (List $11.96)

MAHLER: SYMPHONY NO. 3 IN D MINOR (2 records) / **LR Price $9.95** (List $11.96)

MAHLER: SYMPHONY NO. 6 IN A MINOR; SYMPHONY NO. 9 IN D (3 Records) / **LR Price $18.65** (List $20.94)

MAHLER: SYMPHONY NO. 10 (Vers. by Cooke), "DAS LIED VON DER ERDE" (3 Records) / **LR Price $10.95** (List $11.98)

DELIUS: IN A SUMMER GARDEN—MUSIC OF FREDERICK DELIUS / LR Price $4.95 (List $5.98)

VAUGHN-WILLIAMS: MUSIC; SERENADE TO SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN D / LR Price $4.95 (List $5.95)

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Hospers— *(Continued from page 3)*

find some of his best: "In a Summer Garden," "On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring," "Summer Night on a River," and "A Song before Sunrise." This record plus two others, Angel 36756 (containing his "Appalachia," based on American Negro themes) and Angel 36415 (all three records beautifully conducted by Barbirolli), will together give you the best of Delius' music.

The twentieth-century inheritor of the Beethoven-Brahms symphonic tradition is the English composer, Ralph Vaughn-Williams (1872-1958). His early symphonies are all programmatic, but extremely evocative: no. 1 ("The Sea"), no. 2 ("London"), and no. 3 ("Pastoral"). All of them are impressive works, particularly as conducted by Sir Adrian Boult on Angel, but especially the no. 2 (Angel 36838).

But it is in his later symphonies that his great sustained power as a symphonist is displayed. Combining the drive and energy of Beethoven with the romanticism and involution of Brahms, we have some of the most moving orchestral music of our day. My own favorite is the intense no. 5 (Boult on "Serenade to Music; Symphony No. 5 in D," with Vaughn-Williams' fine "Serenade to Music" on part of one side), although perhaps the single most powerful movement is the second movement of the no. 6 (Boult on Angel 36469, with the lovely romantic violin-and-orchestra tone-poem, "Lark Ascending," on part of the second side).

In concluding, let me mention three other works worth considering. Vaughn-Williams' fellow Englishman, William Walton (1902-), has written one symphony with great drive and suspense (Previn on RCA LSC-2927) and the enjoyable "Facade Suite" (London 15191). Gustav Holst (1874-1934) wrote a famous orchestral piece, "The Planets" (Boult on Angel 36420). And, the far more prolific Englishman, Benjamin Britten (1913-), has written some intermittently interesting orchestral works, particularly enjoyable being the "Spring Symphony" (London 25242). *(Next month: Orchestral Music of the Twentieth Century.)*

EGALITARIANISM AS A REVOLT AGAINST NATURE AND OTHER ESSAYS

By Murray N. Rothbard

For well over a decade, libertarians all across the country have been looking through the archives like medieval monks searching out one or another of Murray Rothbard's numerous articles in this or that—often obscure—journal. To compile all of this amazingly prolific scholar's articles, essays and reviews would be a multi-volume task, for his range of interests and knowledge is truly astounding.

Dr. Rothbard is best known for his work in economics and history, and therefore strangely enough he is least appreciated in areas where he has done some of his most cogent and seminal work, i.e., in the area of social philosophy and social commentary. The publication of *For a New Liberty* has helped considerably in acquainting libertarians with the consistency and eloquence of his point of view. With the publication of *Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature*, however, readers will be able to go directly to the important foundations upon which the Rothbardian edifice has been built. There are very few ideas which are as important and more in need of circulation than the ideas of Professor Rothbard. This book—when combined with *For a New Liberty*—will take the reader far into the depths of the evolutionary process of the brilliant mind of this great libertarian. REVIEWED BY WALTER E. GRINDER / **Political Philosophy** (151 pages)/ **LR Price $2.50**

HOFFER'S AMERICA

By James D. Koerner

THE TRUE BELIEVER & THE TEMPER OF OUR TIME

Both By Eric Hoffer

When his first book, *The True Believer*, was published in 1951, Eric Hoffer was unknown. Readers recognized, however, that a powerful and original talent had made its appearance and were astonished to learn that Hoffer was a common laborer who had been virtually blind in childhood, who had recovered his eyesight, and who had educated himself entirely by his own efforts.

The True Believer remains his most important book. In it he examined the appeal of mass movements and attempted to understand—and explain—how such totalitarian forces as nazism, fascism, and communism are able to enlist so many in their crusades.

Part of Hoffer's conclusion is that when individualism dies, tyranny becomes possible and, often, probable. He wrote that, "Faith in a holy cause is to a considerable extent a substitute for lost faith in ourselves.... A man is likely to mind his own business when it is worth minding. When it is not, he takes his mind off his own meaningless affairs by minding other people's business.... In running away from ourselves we either fall on our neighbor's shoulder or fly at his throat."

Totalitarian movements offer man an escape from the difficulties of freedom and the task of confronting his own individuality. The man who is unhappy with himself, Hoffer writes, is the prime target of the organizers of mass movements:

> Unless a man has the talents to make something of himself, freedom is an irksome burden. Of what avail is freedom to choose if the self be ineffectual? We join a mass movement to escape individual responsibility, or in the words of the ardent young Nazi, "to be free from freedom." It was not sheer hypocrisy when the rank and file Nazis declared themselves not guilty of all the enormities they had committed. They considered themselves cheated and maligned when made to shoulder responsibilities for obeying orders. Had they not joined the Nazi movement in order to be free from responsibility?

Modern American society faces a strenuous movement in behalf of the philosophy which holds that "society"—not the individual—is responsible for all actions and that the goal of the body politic is the achievement of "equality"—not the traditional idea of equal opportunity, but the opposed notion of equality of condition. The appeal of such a philosophy, Hoffer tells us, is the same appeal held by nazism, fascism, and communism. He writes, "The passion for equality is partly a passion for anonymity, to be one thread of the many which make up a tunic, one thread not distinguishable from the others.... They want to eliminate free competition and the ruthless testing to which the individual is continually subjected in a free society."

By rejecting his individuality, man, Hoffer states,

> not only renounces personal advantage but is also rid of personal responsibility. There is no telling to what extremes of cruelty and ruthlessness a man will go when he is freed from the fears, hesitations, doubts and the vague stirrings of decency which go with individual judgment. When we lose our individual independence in the corporateness of a mass movement, we find a new freedom—freedom to hate, bully, lie, torture, murder and betray without shame or remorse.... The hatred and cruelty which have their source in selfishness are ineffectual things compared with the venom and ruthlessness born of selflessness.

To produce willing submission to tyranny, to enlist men and women who will man the gas chambers of Auschwitz or the slave labor camps of the Gulag Archipelago, totalitarian leaders must first destroy all aspects of individuality. As Hoffer points out:

> In order to be assimilated into a collective medium a person has to be stripped of his individual distinctness. He has to be deprived of free choice and independent judgment.... By elevating dogma above reason, the individual's intelligence is prevented from becoming self-reliant. Economic dependence is maintained by centralizing economic power and by a deliberately created scarcity of the necessities of life.

Now, 23 years after publication of *The True Believer*, after six additional books, Hoffer is recognized as a brilliant aphorist and a provocative commentator on men and events. Despite this, Hoffer the man has remained rather obscure. In *Hoffer's America*, James Koerner attempts to satisfy the curiosity of Hoffer's readers and stimulate the interest of those who have not yet encountered him. In both of these attempts he is notably successful.

The book grew out of many talks and walks taken by the author with his subject, and many issues are touched upon in its pages. As Hoffer sees the American past, it was personal liberty—and the heavy burden of work that goes with it—that gave the ordinary American the scope he needed to excel. For Hoffer, this freedom to be left alone, to be free of coercion by state or society, has always been crucial. When he traveled from New York to California as a young man and saw the country for the first time, he "looked around," as he puts it, "and I liked what I saw. This was a country in which you could be left alone.... This country was

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Hoffer— *(Continued from page 4)*

made largely by people who wanted to be left alone. Those who couldn't thrive when left to themselves never felt at ease in America."

Koerner notes that, "Hoffer's ire is easily raised, but nothing raises it quicker than the platitudes of liberal academics, intellectuals and politicians about the relationship of poverty and crime. The fact that their theories seem to be accepted unthinkingly by the majority makes him madder still."

"Poverty causes crime." Hoffer shouts. "That is what they are always shoving down our throats, the misbegotten bastards. Poverty does *not* cause crime. If it did we would have been buried in crime for most of our history and so would every other nation on earth." He observers that he has lived most of his life with poor people who did not commit crimes. "Criminals cause crime," he declares, "And the minute we let them get away with it, we are going to have lots more."

The arrogance of American "intellectuals" is also a subject which brings forth a vigorous response. To Hoffer, the touchstone of the intellectual is not a passion for truth but a passion for power, especially power over people. The *sine qua non* of the Hoffer intellectual is his conviction that he belongs to an educated minority whose duty it is to instruct the rest of mankind and, if necessary, compel them to be better than they are. According to Hoffer, one need not be particularly intelligent to be an "intellectual," and he notes that, "In their hearts American intellectuals have always hated the ordinary man whom they have sought to dominate. They have never been able to accept the fact that the riffraff of Europe were able to tame the American continent and build the world's greatest and best nation largely without the guidance of intellectuals."

In *The Temper Of Our Time*, Hoffer discusses the role and outlook of the intellectual at some length. He writes that, "A ruling intelligentsia, whether in Europe, Asia or Africa, treats the masses as raw materials to be experimented on, processed, and wasted at will. Charles Peguy saw it long ago, before the First World War. The intellectuals, he said, dealt with people the way manufacturers deal with wares, they were capitalists of people." Hoffer goes on to declare that,

> A saviour who wants to turn men into angels will be as much a hater of human nature as a man who wants to turn them into slaves and animals. Man must be dehumanized, must be turned into an object, before he can be processed into something wholly different from what he is. It is a paradox that the idealistic reformer has a mechanical, lifeless conception of man's being. He sees man as something that can be taken apart and put together, and the renovation of the individual and of society as a process of manufacturing.

Those who would destroy man's individual uniqueness, who would place him in a straight-jacket of "equality" and "uniformity," who would take from him the responsibility for his own life and actions, are setting the stage for even greater tyranny than we have seen thus far in the twentieth century. Eric Hoffer understands this all too well, and he is justifiably concerned about contemporary trends. He is truly a philosopher of individualism and freedom, and those who would preserve a society in which such values flourish would do well to consider his ideas. REVIEWED BY ALLAN C. BROWNFELD / **Political Philosophy-Psychology** / *True Believer* (160 pages) / **LR Price $.75** / *Hoffer's America* (137 pages) / **LR Price $5.95** / *Temper of Our Time* (138 pages) / **LR Price $.75**

SERPENT IN EDEN

By Fred C. Hobson, Jr.

If you ever go back to the book reviews printed during the Great Depression, take a look at the reception Scott Fitzgerald got. Your jaw will drop. Today anything he wrote—any word he typed or scribbled—is considered publishable and praiseworthy. But most of the critics of the Depression era treated him and his works with irritation or contempt. Some, especially the Marxist ones, scoffed that he had the scale of values of a high school senior. There are, in other words, fashions in literature as well as in bluejeans. Today Mencken is unfashionable, particularly among the Manhattan mandarins. Any book sympathetic to him rates stiff scoldings. He was a prejudiced man, as he freely admitted, and the trouble is that his prejudices are not always those we like. Yet it's possible that his reputation will rise again, along with a more just estimate of his strengths and weaknesses.

We find an abundance of material for such an estimate in *Serpent in Eden*. It describes how he both derided and supported the South, how the different parts of the South reacted to him, and how he helped and hindered the southern literary renaissance.

It all started with a single outrageous essay. Timing had a lot to do with it. "The Sahara of the Bozart" hit the bookstands at exactly the right season. It appeared in a collection of Mencken's essays entitled *Prejudices: Second Series*, which was issued in October 1920. A shorter and earlier form, to me equally brilliant, had appeared as a column in the New York *Evening Mail* one night in November 1917. Nobody noticed it; it came too soon. But with the world war done and its backlash of cynicism manifest throughout the country, the essay made a steadily widening impression.

In Virginia, in the Carolinas, in Louisiana, even in Mississippi, it was noticed by the brightest of the young newspapermen and writers. Among the first of them was Gerald Johnson of the Greensboro, N.C., *Daily News*. No mere overnight sensation, "The Sahara" continued to be noticed and 10 years after publication was still affecting some remarkable Southerners, among them W. J. Cash of the Charlotte, N.C., *News*, who went on with Mencken's encouragement to write his classic *The Mind of the South*. More little magazines began to be founded below the Potomac and more than one of those already in existence but half asleep revived as the result of Mencken's barbs.

The best magazine to emerge was the *Reviewer*, published in Richmond by Emily Clark, who shrewdly used her little-girlishness to sustain a first-rate publication. She got Mencken to advise her and even to contribute.

The universities showed both the short-run and the long-run effects of the essay. Faculty members, puffing on their pipes, discussed it at their lunch tables and in their lounges. Its deepest effect came, understandably, at the university readiest to receive it: the University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill. Its faculty already ranked as the most energetic and eminent in the South. Its leader in rallying social forces was Howard Odum, but it showed distinction as well in the humanities and especially in literary studies.

Throughout the 1920s Mencken kept up his brisk attack. He did it, however, with liking if not love. Strange though it sounds, he felt drawn to the South, felt comfortable in it in many ways, and wanted it to improve. He himself would have jeered at the notion that he hoped to reform an erring quadrant of a country. Yet any examination of the bulk of his comments during the decade shows his good will. He hailed the accomplishments of James Branch Cabell, enjoying his elegant wit and romantic cynicism. He defended him from the censors, local and federal, official and unofficial, who sniffed the obscenities in his pages on Poictesme. He looked around eagerly for Southern talent. He opened the *American Mercury* in particular not only to incisive journalists like Johnson or Cash, but to the authors of short stories, essays, and poems. He published four of William Faulkner's short stories in the *Mercury* in the early 1930s. And when he finally married, he married a Southern writer, Sara Haardt of Montgomery, Alabama.

In the first half of his book Hobson brings together the evidences of Mencken's effect, levying on letters, newspaper reports, periodicals, and many other prime sources. In the second half he moves on to the story of Mencken's waning influence and a description of the elements in Southern culture that Mencken failed to appreciate.

This part of the book centers on the "fugitives," led for polemical purposes by Allen Tate and Donald Davidson. They came from Vanderbilt University and proved to be the most gifted group of writers to develop in the South during our century. From the outset, in the early 1920s, they were devoted to poetry, and to intricate poetry. By the end of the 1920s they had become devoted to land as well as literature and had announced themselves as defenders of the Old South. They soon regarded Mencken as blind and bigoted: blind to the values of poetry which they saw so clearly, bigoted about an agrarian South, formed before the Civil War, which to them lay much closer to Utopia than did the noisy, egalitarian North. Allen Tate submitted poems to the *Mercury* and Mencken promptly sent them back; these facts summed up the situation.

During the 1930s most of the fugitives moved to posts in Northern universities and carried their contempt for Mencken with them. They charged him, correctly, with the failure to respond to modern and modernistic poetry. They charged him with neglecting the novels of the two Southern giants of the time, Faulkner and Thomas Wolfe. And they found his basic stance as a critic distasteful. The scrutiny of the text, the subtle sympathy for atmospheres, the appreciation of the source, these were the hallmarks of the "new criticism" the fugitives founded. They were never characteristics of Mencken's mode. He relished wit, clarity, precision, and gusto.

At the end Hobson quotes Mencken for the defense: "Before the creative artist of genuine merit can function freely, the way must be cleared for him, and that clearly is best effected by realistic and unsentimental criticism." As Hobson sees it, that was Mencken's contribution, and he declines to scold Mencken because he refused to do everything else. This is a solidly researched book, well thought through. It should help in the revaluation of Mencken and his role in our culture. ©1974 The Evening Star Newspaper Co. REVIEWED BY CARL BODE / 242 pages / **LR Price $8.95**

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ABOUT BEH

By B. F.

Thomas Szasz

One of the things that distinguishes persons from animals is that, for reasons familiar enough, persons cannot simply live: they must have, or must feel that they have, some reason for doing so. In other words, men, women, and children must have some sense and significance in and for their lives. If they do not they perish. Hence, I believe that those who rob people of the meaning and significance they have given their lives kill them and should be considered murderers, at least metaphorically. B. F. Skinner is such a murderer. Like all mass murderers, he fascinates—especially his intended victims.

But, it may be objected, Skinner has no political or military power at his command. How, then, could he inflict such a grave injury on mankind? The answer is as simple as is Skinner's mentality. Man qua organism is an animal; to destroy it, one must kill it. Man qua person is the animal that uses language; to destroy him, one must destroy his language. This, it seems to me, is what Skinner is out to accomplish. Perhaps more than any of his earlier books, *About Behaviorism* makes this crystal clear. It is not really a book at all, but a dictionary: it furnishes us with the equivalents, in Skinnerese, of ordinary English words.

Simply put, what Skinner is out to do is to destroy ordinary language and to substitute his own language for it. It is a sort of one-man Esperanto effort. Skinner puts it this way: "I consider scores, if not hundreds, of examples of mentalistic usage. They are taken from current writings, but I have not cited the sources.... Many of these expressions I 'translate into behavior.' " That is, indeed, what the whole book is about: translation—from English into "behavior." Skinner's pride at citing what others have said without giving their names is of interest in this connection. "I am not arguing with the authors," he explains, as if references served the whole purpose of identifying enemies. It seems to me that his not naming names is consistent with his general thesis that there are, and should be, no individuals. Books without authors are simply a part of Skinner's grand design of acts without actors—his master plan for world conquest.

What about Skinner's own acts, his speaking and writing? Is he not an agent and an author? Not really, says Skinner. In the first place, you and I may speak and write, but not Skinner; Skinner exhibits "verbal behavior." I am not kidding. "Finally, a word about my own verbal behavior," he writes in a chapter titled "The Causes of Behavior." Skinner thus disclaims writing in a language, which is asserting a falsehood, or having a style, which is asserting a truth. Instead, he claims to be exhibiting physiological behavior, which is reductionism of the stupidest sort. But this is what he espouses: "For purposes of casual discourse, I see no reason to avoid such an expression as 'I have chosen to discuss...' (though I question the possibility of free choice).... When it is important to be clear about an issue, nothing but a technical vocabulary will suffice. It will often seem forced or roundabout. Old ways of speaking are abandoned with regret, and new ones are awkward and uncomfortable, but the change must be made." To what? To Skinnerese. Why? To aggrandize Skinner.

HERE IS another sample of how Skinner sees the world and proposes to explain it: "A small part of the universe is contained within the skin of each of us. There is no reason why it should have any special physical status because it lies within this boundary and eventually we will have a complete account of it from anatomy and physiology." So what else is new? Physicalism, biologism, reductionism, scientism—all have had much more eloquent spokesmen than Skinner. Why all the fuss about him, then? Perhaps because he is a Harvard professor who is ignorant both of his own sources (for example, Auguste Comte) and of the many important critics of scientism (from John Stuart Mill to Friedrich von Hayek), thus making it not only possible but positively respectable for millions to believe that the drivel between the covers of his book is both new and good.

Skinner loves anatomy and physiology, although, so far as I can make out, he knows nothing about either. Perhaps this allows him to think that these "disciplines" can somehow explain everything. How else are we to account for such statements as these: "The human species, like all other species, is the product of natural selection. Each of its members is an extremely complex organism, a living system, the subject of anatomy and physiology." What is this, an excerpt from a biology lecture to bright second graders? No. It is Skinner's introduction to his explanation of "innate behavior." There is more, much more, of this. Two more sentences should suffice: "But what is felt or introspectively observed is not an important part of the physiology which fills the temporal gap in an historical analysis." "The experimental analysis of behavior is a rigorous, extensive, and rapidly advancing branch of biology...."

NEXT, WE COME to Skinner's key concepts: "operant behavior" and "reinforcement." "A positive reinforcer," he explains, "strengthens any behavior that produces it: a glass of water is positively reinforcing when we are thirsty, and if we then draw and drink a glass of water, we are more likely to do so again on similar occasions. A negative reinforcer strengthens any behavior that reduces or terminates it: when we take off a shoe that is pinching, the reduction of pressure is negatively reinforcing, and we are more likely to do so again when a shoe pinches." Well, I simply do not understand this, but that may be because I have not grasped the fine points of Skinner's language—excuse me, "verbal behavior." Water relieves thirst. Taking off a tight shoe relieves pain. Why call one a "positive reinforcer" and the other a "negative reinforcer"? I have no satisfactory answer to this question. Skinner thinks he does, and I herewith quote it: "The fact that operant conditioning, like all physiological processes, is a product of natural selection throws light on the question of what kinds of consequences are reinforcing and why. The expressions 'I like Brahms,' 'I love Brahms,' 'I enjoy Brahms,' and 'Brahms pleases me,' may easily be taken to refer to feelings but they can be taken as statements that the music of Brahms is reinforcing."

Well, I like Brahms, but I do not like Skinner. But do not be misled: this is neither an expression of my ill-feelings toward Skinner nor an act of criticism of his work. Ill-feelings, as Skinner himself has just explained, do not eixst; so I merely experience Skinner as "negatively reinforcing." And in view of Skinner's definition of a "forceful act," mine is surely not a critical one. "Depriving a person of something he needs or wants is not a forceful act," he asserts without any qualifications. Depriving a person of property or of liberty or even of air are thus *not* forceful acts. Skinner does not tell us what *is* a forceful act.

Although force may not be Skinner's forte, he feels very confident about being able to explain why people gamble, climb mountains, or invent things: "All gambling systems are based on variable-ratio schedules of reinforcement, although their effects are usually attributed to feelings.... The same variable-ratio schedule affects those who explore, prospect, invent, conduct scientific research, and compose works of art, music, or literature...." The irony of it all is that Skinner keeps contrasting himself with Freud whom, in these respects, he resembles and imitates. Freud attributed creativity to the repression and sublimation of all sorts of nasty "drives" from anality to homosexuality. Skinner attributes them to "sched-

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ules of reinforcement." Anything will do, so long as it reduces the artist to the level of robot or rat.

As Skinner warms to his subject, he reveals more and more about his willingness to do away—in his science and perhaps elsewhere—with persons qua agents. "In a behavioral analysis," he writes, "a person is an organism, a member of the human species, which has acquired a repertoire of behavior." In a word, an animal. He then continues: "The person who asserts his freedom by saying, '*I* determine what I shall do next,' is speaking of freedom in or from a current situation: the I who thus seems to have an option is the product of a history from which it is not free and which in fact determines what it will now do." That takes care of my personal responsibility for writing this review. I did not write it at all; a "locus" did. I do not believe that, but Skinner evidently does: "A person is not an originating agent; he is a locus, a point at which many genetic and environmental conditions come together in a joint effect."

Skinner has an absolutely unbounded love for the idea that there are no individuals, no agents—that there are only organisms, animals: "The scientific analysis of behavior must, I believe, assume that a person's behavior is controlled by his genetic and environmental histories rather than by the person himself as an initiating, creative agent." This view leads inexorably to his love affair with the image of every human being as a controlled object, with no room, or word, for either controlling others (e.g., tyranny), or for controlling oneself (e.g., self-discipline). The "feeling" of freedom creates some problems for this scheme, but Skinner talks his way out of it, at least to his own satisfaction. He explains that "the important fact is not that we feel free when we have been positively reinforced, but *that we do not tend to escape or counterattack*. [Italics Skinner's.] Feeling free is an important hallmark of a kind of control distinguished by the fact that it does not breed countercontrol."

IT IS IN the chapter titled "The Question of Control" that Skinner explains how in the world he is designing everyone will be controlled, everyone will feel free, and *mirabile visu* no one will control! As this is the capstone in the triumphal arch leading to his Utopia, I will quote Skinner rather than try to paraphrase what he says—for he is after all, quite unparaphrasable:

> The design of human behavior implies, of course, control and possibly the question most often asked of the behaviorist is this: Who is to control? The question represents the age-old mistake of looking to the individual rather than to the world in which he lives. It will not be a benevolent dictator, a compassionate therapist, a devoted teacher, or a public-spirited industrialist who will design a way of life in the interests of everyone. We must look instead at the conditions under which people govern, give help, teach, and arrange incentive systems in particular ways. In other words, we must look to the culture as a social environment. Will a culture evolve in which no individual will be able to accumulate vast power and use it for his own aggrandizement in ways which are harmful to others? Will a culture evolve in which individuals are not so much concerned with their own actualization and fulfillment that they do not give serious attention to the future of the culture? These questions, and many others like them, are the questions to be asked rather than *who* will control and to what end. No one steps outside casual stream. No one really intervenes.

No one "intervenes." Everyone is an "effect." Amen.

But enough is enough. I wrote at the beginning of this review that human beings cannot live without meaning; that they either create or destroy meaning; and that, in my opinion, Skinner is, or aspires to be, one of the great destroyers of meaning, and, hence, of man. This is the note on which I now want to elaborate and on which I want to end.

Although languages, George Steiner observed in *Language and Silence*, "have great reserves of life," these reserves are not inexhaustible: "... there comes a breaking point. Use a language to conceive, organize, and justify Belsen; use it to make out specifications for gas ovens; use it to dehumanize man during twelve years of calculated bestiality. Something will happen to it.... Something of the lies and sadism will settle in the marrow of the language."

Others—in particular, Orwell—have suggested that what has happened to the German language under the influence of nazism has happened to other modern languages under the influence of bureaucratization, collectivization, and technicization. Skinnerese is accordingly just one of the depersonalized, scientistic idioms of our age—a member of the family of languages for loathing and liquidating man. What distinguishes Skinnerese from its sister languages—such as legalese, medicalese, or psychoanalyse—is the naive but infectious enthusiasm of its author for world-destruction through the conscious and deliberate destruction of language.

Skinner devotes a whole chapter of *About Behaviorism* to language. Aptly titled "Verbal Behavior," it is devoted to the destruction of the idea of language. "Relatively late in its history," Skinner begins, "the human species underwent a remarkable change: its vocal musculature came under operant control." Skinner then explains why he wants to get rid of the word "language": "The very difference between 'language' and 'verbal behavior' is an example of a word requiring 'mentalistic explanations.' Language has the character of a thing, something a person acquires and possesses.... A much more productive view is that verbal behavior is behavior. It has a special character only because it is reinforced by its effects on people...." Translation: Do not say "language" if you want to be positively reinforced by Dr. Skinner.

PERHAPS REALIZING that much of what he says is an attempt to replace a generally accepted metaphor with a metaphor of his own choosing, Skinner reinterprets metaphor as well: "In verbal behavior one kind of response evoked by a merely similar stimulus is called metaphor." He evidently prefers this to Aristotle's definition, according to which we use metaphor when we give something a name that rightly belongs to something else.

Finally, Skinner redefines "truth" itself. This definition is so revealing of his effort and so repellent in its effect (at least on me), that I shall end my series of quotations with it:

> The truth of a statement is limited by the sources of the behavior of the speaker, the control exerted by the current setting, the effects of similar settings in the past, the effects upon the listener leading to precision or to exaggeration or falsification, and so on.

Honest to God, this is what Skinner says is truth. He does not *say* what is falsehood. Or what is fakery. He does not have to: he *displays* them.

These, then, are the reasons why I consider Skinner to be just another megalomaniacal destroyer, or would-be destroyer, of mankind—one of many from Plato to Timothy Leary. But Skinner has the distinction, in this company, of being more simple-minded than most, and hence being able to advocate a political system no one has thought of before: namely, one in which all are ruled and no one rules! Plato envisioned a Utopia in which people are perfectly ruled by perfect philosopher-kings: here everyone was destroyed qua person, save for the rulers. Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler had their own versions of Utopia: like Plato's, their Utopias were characterized by the destruction, actual or metaphorical, of large classes of mankind; but some individuals were still considered to be agents. Skinner has gone all of these one better. He has constructed a world of acts without actors, of conditioning without conditioners, of slaves without masters, of politics without politicians, of the good life without ethics, of man without language. It is an achievement worthy of a Harvard professor. REVIEWED BY THOMAS S. SZASZ / **Psychology** (256 pages) / **LR Price $6.95**

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AN AFTERWORD FROM Readers, Authors, Reviewers

Something to Ponder

In conjunction with Mr. Childs' review of Irving Kristol's *On the Democratic Idea in America* (*LR*, October 1974) and its theme of the departure of the Republic from the principles upon which it was founded and the intrusion of the unforeseen into the workings of social theories, perhaps readers of *Libertarian Review* would find the following paragraphs from Albert Jay Nock's *The Book of Journeyman* interesting:

> Viewed by hindsight, some of my most cherished social theories work out in an odd way. For one thing, I am impressed by the ugliness resulting from their operation—freedom and equalitarianism, for instance. I am all for both; yet where liberty and equality most prevail, or are most thought to prevail, the resulting civilization is extremely unlovely. My present habitat in the country is near a seashore resort that thirty years ago rather looked down its nose at Newport's summer society as being an amalgam of the newly-rich. It was somewhat inaccessible; there were transportation difficulties about getting there, which kept the crowds away. At present, anybody with a motor-car or the price of a middling bus-ride may go there, and everyone goes. I am glad everyone can. The old life of the place was bottomed on a social theory that I utterly disbelieve in and regard as false and vicious. The new life is bottomed on an equalitarian theory that I believe in and subscribe to with all my heart, yet the old life gave rise to an amenity that was pleasing, beautiful, and civilizing, and the new life has nothing of it, but is, on the contrary, tawdry and hideous.... I have to recognize, with searchings of heart, that the sense of whatever in human society is enviable, graceful and becoming has been bred by a regime so monstrously unjust and flagitious that it had no right ever to exist on earth. I am not speaking now of inanimate cultural legacies in literature and the other arts, but of the tone of a people's actual social life. I remember being in a European country before the First World War, and a friend's saying to me, "Well here we are, where according to your social creed and mine everything is absolutely wrong, and yet these are the happiest people on earth." There was no doubt about it, they were. I wonder about the effect on their happiness if my friend and I could by magic have conjured their infamous regime out of existence and replaced it by a hundred-percent democracy.... Personally, my social theories reach far beyond anything that is contemplated by American institutions, since I am an individualist, anarchist, single-taxer and free-trader. I think also that the general course of things is in those directions. But whenever I feel inclined to hurry up the course of things, I ask myself how much at home I should feel in a society of my own creating, if I had to create it out of the material at present available.

AL KIMEL
Annandale, N.Y.

Subtle is the Serpent...

Note: At the writers' request, this letter appears "exactly as written."—KTP

As two fellow Students of Objectivism, we wish to extend hearty congratulations to a third, R. A. Childs, Jr., on his brillant review of *Basic Principles of Objectivism* [*LR*, August 1974]. Indeed, this is the only review either of us can recall in which Ayn Rand is accorded the full recognition she so richly deserves. In fact, the recognition is so full, it is left totally implicit.

Paradoxical, you say, that full recognition can be totally implicit? Not at all! Permit us to illustrate this with an example from history. When a Thomist, such as Cajetan, reviewed the Angelic Doctor's Commentaries on the writings of The Philosopher he would dwell not upon the validity of Aristotle's text—after all, the eternal truth is not open to question; rather, he would concern himself with whether or not Aquinas' exegesis was faithful to the word of Aristotle, i.e., to the truth. (For those readers unacquainted with the history of philosophy, we might explain that the purposes of Aquinas' Commentaries were merely to delineate Aristotle's original proclamations; hence, Cajetan would examine not those proclamations themselves, but the manner in which Aquinas presented and discussed them.)

Now let us relate this historical example to the issue at hand. Childs, in his review of Branden's commentary on Rand's philosophy has not even bothered to dwell on the fact that when we discuss the content of these records we are discussing Rand; after all, why elaborate on the obvious? He has also not seen fit to discuss the content of Objectivism in his review; merely Branden's presentation of it is considered. Why is this? Well, just as the student of Aquinas takes the work of Aristotle as not open to question in substance, only in manner of presentation, so too Childs, when studying Branden (the Branden before the fall, that is) takes Rand's truths to be equally irrefutable. On another level, the biologist does not question the facts of nature; rather, he concerns himself with his colleagues' and his own understanding of those facts. So too, a true philosopher is concerned not with the (unquestionable) validity of Aristotelianism and Objectivism, but only with the accuracy with which the author under consideration (in this case—Branden) delineates and "builds upon the thought and works" of these two philosophers.

For example, the unenlightened reviewer of these records would probably answer Kristol's "Why behave

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(Continued on page 10)

in such and such a way? Why not behave differently? . . ." by giving Rand's answers to these questions and explaining that they are Rand's answers. Childs doesn't even think to explain that the answer Branden gives is actually Rand's—that is too obvious to the Objectivist reviewer. Instead, Childs, with full confidence that his readers will know the true authorship of these ideas, does not fear to leave the implication that they originated with Branden. Talk about full and total acceptance of Rand on the highest level of integration possible! Congratulations are in order!

Or, take another example. Who but a thoroughly integrated Objectivist could be so seemingly careless as to state that "Ms. Branden demonstrates the crucially important role of purpose in thinking. . . ." Only one who has completely embraced Objectivism would find it unnecessary to point out that Barbara Branden is here merely delineating one of Rand's more fundamental points.

You know, the unthinking admirer of Rand's might be offended by Childs' review. After all, Rand's name is mentioned only twice in the entire piece (and once in the company of a known plagiarizer—of herself)! Additionally, no where in the entire piece is Rand accorded the accolades that even a Murray Rothbard is awarded in Childs' other review in the same *LR* issue. But such a reader misses the point. Rothbard is an intelligent writer. Rand is Rand! It is of this fact that Childs is so crucially aware. To praise Objectivism in a review of these records is as to praise Aristotelianism in a review of W. D. Ross, or to praise Darwinism in a review of an evolutionist's work. The doctrines are all so irrefutably true that praise is irrelevant when one is discussing their commentators.

Thus, once again, we extend our congratulations to Childs on his pathbreaking review (and to *LR* as well, for having the insight and courage to publish it) and, we might add, we eagerly await further reviews of this caliber.

GIL GOLDMAN
STUART D. WARNER
Brooklyn, N.Y.

"Rich Theory of Criticism"

I note with astonishment the re-emergence, in your October issue, of that profound theory of dramatic criticism: either the drama "says" life is a sewer or it "says" there are heroes. With this powerful theory we can proceed to divide all works into those with the right sense of life and those with the wrong sense (and mixed cases). How illuminating! And the examples of drama with the right sense have a mysterious tendency to be those in which the protagonist "calmly, thoughtfully, and unemotionally" and in a "clean, hard, and restrained" manner shoots people to death. Do I hear the argument, "Not people, muggers?"

But why take such a concretized view? Aren't we supposed to look for the "abstract theme"? This brings us to the following principle: "A work of art does not tell us to imitate the particular concretes it utilizes; a work presents an abstract theme." The hero of *Death Wish* only indulges in (pseudo) justified killing. But in light of this interpretive principle I know. . . what? That the theme is that people should engage in universal killing? Is this interpretation convincing? Surely not. For none are that invoke this vacuous principle.

As another example, consider Barbara Branden's interpretive suggestion that in *Chinatown* businessmen receive special condemnation. There may be some validity to this. The validity would be partially demonstrated by showing that the villain's being a businessman was crucial to the plot. But what about the more particular interpretation that it condemns businessmen associated with (local) government? And, what is crucial here, the "abstract theme" principle counts against Branden's own interpretation. That is, "Why take this concretized view of villainy?"

One should see, then, that this principle is (at best) vacuous. Its employment will (at best) only rationalize whatever interpretive conclusions one is already committed to. For instance, its employment will (at best) rationalize conclusions which accord with the rich theory of criticism mentioned above.

ERIC MACK
Sunderland, Mass.

Hook on Marx

Professor Sidney Hook argues that (a) Marx had a "commitment to democracy," (b) nothing "in Marx. . . justifies the dictatorship of a minority political party to introduce socialism," and (c) Marx was a "humanist."

(a) It is difficult to reconcile democracy with historical materialism, since democracy assumes that people can *choose* their form of government, whereas historical materialism holds that social structures arise, *of necessity*, from the material forces of production that determine human consciousness. Marx did *talk* favorably about democracy here and there, but his theories really left no conceptual room for democracy.

(b) Marx did not *advocate* "the dictatorship of a minority political party," quite true. But something in Marx does justify the cadre concept of leadership. He held that revolutionary consciousness comes only to a few, and when you combine this with the false hopes for social transformation that historical materialism promises, the move to become little helpers of history is not unjustified. Lenin was not an inconsistent Marxist, especially when it is realized that Marx could advocate development while claiming consistency with Hegel. So it is best to contend that if anything justified Lenin's cadre concept, Marxism came closer to it than any other theory near or dear to Lenin.

(c) Marx' humanism, derived initially from Feuerbach but modified by the theory of dialectical development, is very special. For him, human beings did not really exist in pre-communist eras. so Marx wasn't a humanist about *us*. He was a humanist about the *new* man. And this humanism required the abolition of the division of labor, i.e., individuality. Marx' humanism turns out to be coercive in the sense that history must *force* it upon the species. Combine this with the "history's little helpers" result of offering false promises, and you do get Lenin, Stalin, and Lysenko from the Marxian "humanist" framework.

I must respectfully disagree with Professor Hook. Marx is not just a cover for the totalitarians in the Soviet sphere.

TIBOR R. MACHAN
Fredonia, N.Y.

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■ Libertarian Review Press' maiden publication, Murray N. Rothbard's *Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature and Other Essays*, has received favorable treatment at the hands of Paul Varbell in *Reason* and Alan Reynolds in *National Review*. Sharon Presley, in *Laissez-Faire Review*, sees it as a mixed bag. *Egalitarianism* is still available from *LR* at $2.50—or order 50 for Christmas giving at $100. Prices are subject to regular discounts too! (See order form.)

■ April 15 next will be the occasion of a Maryland Libertarian Party celebration of the 200th anniversary of the battles of Lexington and Concord. The Free State LPers' gala will take the form of a protest against the "Infernal Revenue Service." In the past, the MLP has protested President Ford's "amnesty" program and engaged in more conventional political action. Readers interested in such political madcappery are asked to call Chris Grieb, MLP State Chairman, at (301) 449-5646 (evenings).

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■ The Nockian Society will *not* meet this month.

■ *Rental Policy on Cassette Tape Courses.* Several Cassette courses are available through *LR*, both for sale and for rent to groups of six or more persons. *LR* will pay a commission of 25% of the rental fee to anybody interested in organizing a group to attend a series of taped lectures. Organizers would be responsible for arranging a location, for a cassette player, and for collecting and forwarding the tuition to *LR*. Available courses include:

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REVIEWERS FOR THIS ISSUE: Carl Bode is the author of a biography of Mencken and the editor of *The Young Mencken*. His review of *Serpent in Eden* is reprinted with permission from the 2 June 1974 edition of the Washington *Star-News*. **Allan C. Brownfeld** is a columnist for the Phoenix *Gazette* and a free-lance writer. His work has appeared in *The Freeman, Human Events*, and many other journals. **William Danks** is a Fellow of Hawaii's Faculty Institute on Planetary Resource Management. **Peggy Farrell** lives in Los Angeles and was an associate editor of *Book News*. **Walter E. Grinder** teaches economics at Rutgers University and is an *LR* associate editor. **John Hospers** is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern California and an *LR* associate editor. **Eric Mack** is a Visiting Fellow at Harvard University. **George H. Smith** is a student of philosophy and theology and the author of *Atheism: The Case Against God*. **Thomas Szasz** is Professor of Psychiatry at the State University of New York Upstate Medical Center. His many writings include *The Myth of Mental Illness* and *The Second Sin*.

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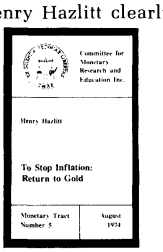
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